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# A Better Choice Learning Park

## Luray, Virginia

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*Virginia Green* is the Commonwealth of Virginia's campaign to promote environmentally-friendly practices in all aspects of Virginia's tourism industry. *Virginia Green* has established "core activities" specific to each sector of tourism, and these practices are considered the required minimum for participation in the program. However, *Virginia Green* encourages its participants to reduce their environmental impacts in all aspects of their operations; and this profile provides a full list of all their "green" activities. These are the activities that guests / customers can expect to find when they visit this facility.

### A Better Choice Learning Park

"Guest Dude Ranch and Ministry for Vacation Packages all over the world - for persons that want to learn more. Our Mission is to teach Heritage and Legacy Living with Reminiscent Learning - Story telling and helping people to get back to basics... Primitive History Trials -on our park... we also teach Primitive History - using fun ways to get people to consider the options they can start consider for a better quality of life."

**Green Statement:** "We have been building a primitive history park since 1994 - when we felt it was time to help people learn and get back to basics and start respecting and honoring our earth, people, and change our way of thinking about how we consume - and start being stewards and servants to leave a path with more than it had so our footprints, words, and deeds have nurtured and left more than was before us when we started. I'm a retired builder and have been living green for decades... and teaching persons how to build green housing and encouraging changing their lifestyles - little by little to save water, garden indoors, solarize their homes with landscaping... and building additions that will solarize and provide energy back into the homes."

### CORE ACTIVITIES for Lodging

"☑" This symbol indicates a required activity for Virginia Green Lodging facilities. Participants self-certify that the activities are in place and they provide additional specifics on other activities. Visitors to A Better Choice Learning Park can expect the following practices:

- ☑ **Optional Linen Service.** Virginia Green Lodging facilities must have some sort of system in place that allows guests to not have their sheets and towels changed every day. This facility pledges that they:
  - Change linens only upon request
  - Train house cleaners on process for optional linen service
  - Purchase water and energy efficient washers and dryers
  - Use non-phosphate, non-toxic, and biodegradable laundry detergents
  - Minimize use of bleach and chlorinated chemicals
  - Give guests the option of bringing their own linens
- ☑ **Recycling and Waste Reduction.** Virginia Green Lodging facilities must recycle Glass Bottles and are highly encouraged to maintain a comprehensive recycling program. This facility pledges that they:
  - Recycle: glass, aluminum cans, plastic, office paper, toner cartridges, newspaper, cardboard, packing supplies, fluorescent lamps, batteries

- Provide containers for recycling in each guest house on the ranch
- Track overall waste bills
- Use bulk soap dispensers instead of individual soaps
- Fill up shampoo bottles
- Instruct housekeeping to save and reuse unopened items
- Use reusable dishware and glassware, and minimize use of disposables
- Use non-bleached napkins and coffee filters
- Provide condiments , cream and sugar, etc. in bulk
- Use water pitches and filtered water to minimize the use of single-use bottles
- Donate excess food from events
- Compost food waste and other compostables
- Have an effective food inventory control to minimize waste
- Purchase locally grown produce and other foods
- Purchase organic and "sustainably-grown" foods
- Recycle grease
- Purchase recycled-content paper towels and toilet paper
- Encourage suppliers to minimize packaging and other waste materials
- Purchase from vendors and service providers with a commitment to the environment
- Make 2-sided copies/ printed materials
- Use electronic correspondence and forms
- Use "green" cleaners that are dispensed in bulk
- Have installed high efficiency hand-dryers in restrooms
- Purchase durable equipment and furniture
- Purchase low VOC carpets and fabrics
- Use reused building materials or those from sustainable sources
- Use latex paints
- Re-use paint thinners
- Properly recycle/dispose of thinners and solvents
- Perform preventative maintenance on all appliances, HVAC systems, plumbing, and vehicles
- Use a last-in/first-out inventory and labeling system
- Use less toxic materials
- Minimize the use of pesticides and herbicides
- Use a nutrient management plan that minimizes the use of fertilizers
- Use integrated pest management (IPM)
- Ranch animals help cultivate and nourish the grounds and their bedding, housing and feed are from recycled materials
- The ranch is planted with wild and native plants and herbs

☒ **Water Conservation.** The facility must have a plan for conserving water that should consider plumbing modifications and landscaping. This facility pledges that they:

- Track overall water usage and wastewater
- Have a numeric goal to reduce water consumption over time
- Perform preventative maintenance to stop drips and leaks
- Use water-flow metering to discover leaks and areas of high use
- Have:
  - low flow restrictors on faucets and showerheads
  - waterless urinals
- Discourage water-based cleanup (sweeping first) and use microfiber technology mops
- Have an effective landscape management plan which utilize drought tolerant species, and minimizes lawn areas
- Have an effective stormwater management plan including: rain gardens, pervious pavement, and the minimization of impervious areas (paving, concrete, etc)
- Have a rain garden
- Use cisterns, rain barrels, and/ or drip-line irrigation
- Maintain vegetative buffers around streams and ponds
- Are a Certified Chesapeake Land Disturbance Operator

☒ **Energy Conservation.** The facility must have a plan in place that encourages replacement of lighting and equipment to energy-efficient alternatives. This facility pledges that they:

- Track overall energy bills

- Have had an energy audit to identify efficiency opportunities
- Have a numeric goal of how much they want to reduce their energy usage over time
- Have an "energy management system" in place to track and meter energy usage
- Use:
  - compact fluorescent light bulbs in all rooms and in canned lighting
  - LED Exit Signs
  - high efficiency fluorescent ballasts and lamps (T5s and T8s)
- Used LEED criteria when developing new buildings
- Are working to achieve LEED-EB (existing building) certification through operational changes and renovations
- Purchase energy efficient appliances and keep freezers full
- Use individual room heaters and solar heating

☒ **Green Events Package.** The facility must offer a "green" or "environmentally-friendly" package for conferences, meetings and other events. Even if the facility only offers occasional, small events, at least recycling will be provided. This facility pledges that

- Teach workshops on Green Living, how to build green, and lifestyle changing

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For more information on **A Better Choice Learning Park**, see [www.takingcareofpeople.org](http://www.takingcareofpeople.org), [www.critterpark.com](http://www.critterpark.com) or [www.abclifestyles.com](http://www.abclifestyles.com) or contact **Stephen or Bonnie Kaufmann** at [bk@shentel.net](mailto:bk@shentel.net).

For more information on **Virginia Green Lodging** program, see [www.deq.virginia.gov/p2/lodging](http://www.deq.virginia.gov/p2/lodging) or go to [www.viriniagreentravel.org](http://www.viriniagreentravel.org).



**Virginia Green Lodging** program is a supporting partner of **Virginia Green**, the Commonwealth's campaign to encourage environmentally-friendly practices in all aspects of Virginia's tourism industry. **Virginia Green** is supported through a partnership between the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, the Virginia Hospitality & Travel Association, and the Virginia Tourism Corporation.

